

## How effective is FIO?

The original research demonstrated that FIO was effective in reducing unprotected vaginal and anal intercourse in both the short-term (one month after the intervention) and long-term (12 months after the intervention). This reduction was due both to increasing use of male and female condoms and decreasing the total number of sexual contacts. Women in the FIO intervention were also more likely to use an alternative protection strategy that they had not previously used.

## What experiences have agencies had with FIO?

"I have seen participants truly blossom over the course of the 8 weeks. It is such a pleasure to facilitate a curriculum that speaks directly to the needs of our clients."

○ Program Manager  
Women's Prison Association  
New York, NY

"The whole eight weeks was a learning experience that I can take back to my community and family."

○ FIO Participant

## For more information contact:

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## Future Is Ours (FIO)

(pronounced fee-oh)

An HIV/STD Sexual Risk Reduction Group-Level  
Intervention for Women at Risk from Sex with Men.

## What is FIO about?

FIO is a small group intervention that helps women address their thoughts, opinions, and feelings about men, sex, and relationships, and gives them an array of skills to help make those relationships safer. FIO emphasizes that women make choices and that these choices are often influenced by gender norms (expectations for how women and men should act in these relationships). These gender norms often make it difficult for women to be empowered for safer sex in their relationships.

FIO teaches women to:

- understand and personalize their risk for HIV and other STDs
- identify gender-based barriers to safer sex
- link self-help to helping others – women in the group, family, and the wider community
- gain practical knowledge and skills to use a range of risk-reduction strategies
- recognize women's sexual rights and the importance of sexual pleasure for women
- build skills necessary to communicate and negotiate safer sex with their partners
- solve problems to avoid setbacks and maintain safer sex over the long term

## Who is FIO for?

FIO is a gender-specific HIV/STD risk reduction intervention designed for heterosexually active, at-risk women of diverse ethnicities (African-American/Black, Caribbean, Latina, White), ages 18 to 30, who live in communities where rates of HIV and other STDs are high.

## How is FIO implemented?

FIO intervention uses:

- eight two-hour group sessions
- small groups of 8-12 high-risk heterosexually active women
- interactive and fun demonstrations, exercises, goal-setting, group discussions, role-plays, and video

## What are the goals of FIO?

The overall goal of FIO is to empower women to reduce unsafe sexual encounters. Women are encouraged to increase their use of male and female condoms as well as use alternative protection strategies. These alternative protection strategies include:

- engaging in outercourse (sex without penetration)
- getting tested for HIV jointly with a partner followed by mutual monogamy and a safety agreement
- deciding to be celibate
- refusing unsafe sex
- deciding not to get involved with a partner who will not use condoms